



Congressman Mike Simpson



Senior Newsletter

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Simpson Joins Colleagues to Help Local Pharmacies

Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson announced that he has signed on to two important initiatives for local pharmacies. Simpson is cosponsoring H.R. 971, the Community Pharmacy Fairness Act and H.R. 1474, the Fair and Speedy Treatment (FAST) of Claims Act of 2007.

The Community Pharmacy Fairness Act (H.R. 971) would allow independent pharmacies the same leverage that much larger chains enjoy when negotiating their Medicare Part D and other third-party contracts. "Many people find talking to their pharmacist about their prescriptions very informative and helpful," Simpson said. "It is unfortunate that local pharmacies have not been able to band together to negotiate lower prices for customers; this legislation will help lessen this unfair gap."

The FAST Claims Act of 2007 (H.R. 1474) would assist local pharmacies in receiving a more timely payment so they are not forced to operate on overhead due to delayed reimbursements. "Independent pharmacists are

struggling to serve their communities because Medicare Part D payments are taking so long to receive," Simpson said. "These pharmacies should not have to shoulder these costs for excessive amounts of time, and I'm hopeful this legislation will ensure reimbursement claims are handled properly."



Congressman Simpson has spoken with independent pharmacists from Idaho on numerous occasions. In a recent meeting, he learned how

valuable these pieces of legislation will be to their industry.

H.R. 971 has been referred to the House Judiciary Committee, and H.R. 1474 has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce and the Ways and Means Committee.

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Make Sure Your Records Match Ours

By Jeanne Tyler, SS Public Affairs Specialist, Boise

It is important to regularly check your records to make sure that the name and number on your Social Security card match up with the name and number you're using elsewhere. If you don't, it could cost you time, money and effort to resolve.

Your Social Security number and the name on your Social Security card are often used by companies and government agencies as a way to check your identity. If anything is amiss, you could have a problem. That's why you should regularly check to make sure your records match. This is especially true for people who have recently changed their names, such as new brides or adopted children.

Here are a few examples of situations where mismatches can cause trouble.

- **Timely tax refunds.** The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) checks your return against your Social Security records. If your name and number don't match up, it could mean a delay in your tax refund or trouble with the IRS.
- **Your vote counts.** But not if your voter registration records don't match up. Don't go to the polls only to discover that you don't have permission to vote because of a mismatch.
- **Leave the driving to us.** You'll have to if you can't renew your drivers license due to a name and Social Security number mismatch with your state's Department or Bureau of Motor Vehicles.
- **Payroll problems.** Make sure your employer and human resources department are using the correct name and Social Security number. Not only could it be a red flag to your employer when your identity doesn't match, it could affect

your future Social Security benefits.

- **Credit where credit is due.** If your earnings are not reported to Social Security under your correct name and number, you may not get the earnings credits you're due — and that could translate to lower benefit payments in your future. Such earnings discrepancies can be corrected, but it can cause an inconvenient delay when you file for benefits.



There are many reasons why your identity records should match ours. So make sure that any time you deal with a company or government agency, they have your correct name and Social Security number as it appears on your Social Security card.

To learn more about your Social Security card and number, visit our website at www.socialsecurity.gov/ssnumber/. You can also call us at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) or visit your local Social Security office.

To learn more about the Medicare prescription drug plans and special enrollment periods, visit www.medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY 1-877-486-2048).

Do you know someone who would like to receive the Senior Newsletter?

**E-mail Fran Symms at
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Health Tip of the Week

Afraid of arthritis?

One in five Americans have been diagnosed with this painful condition and half of those over the age of 75 report symptoms, making arthritis **the number one cause of disability** in the country. If you are disabled, and have been so for some time, you may qualify for Medicare before you turn 65.

Faced with the same national problem, Australian researchers surveyed 8,700 women between the ages of 48 and 79 over a three-year period to study the benefits of physical activity in preventing arthritis. And findings published in [Arthritis Research and Therapy](#) last month indicate that **exercise—even if it is only for an hour and 15 minutes a week—can prevent the painful symptoms of arthritis** for women in their 70s who are not yet affected.

Although researchers can't yet explain why, there is clear evidence that **the more these women exercised, the less pain they experienced** in the following years. To learn more about arthritis—and to sign up for an Arthritis Walk in your area—visit the [Arthritis Foundation](#) online. Visit [Medicare Interactive](#) to find out more about how you can qualify for Medicare because of disability.



HELP WITH YOUR PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage -

Medicare is offering voluntary prescription drug coverage. **You must join a Medicare prescription drug plan to get this prescription drug coverage.** If you have limited income and resources, you may be able to get extra help paying for this if:

- Your average monthly income is less than \$1,296 and you live alone or if you live only with your spouse and your total monthly income is less than \$1,731. Your income could be higher if you live in Alaska or Hawaii, support other family members who live with you or if you have earnings from work, and
- You have resources (such as money in a bank, stocks or bonds) worth \$10,210 or less (\$20,410 or less if you are married and living with your spouse). The resource limits can be slightly higher (an additional \$1,500 per person) if you will use some of your money for burial expenses.

If you think you may qualify you should fill out an **Application for Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs** right away. If you have sent it in already, you may hear soon if you qualify for extra help.

For more information about getting extra help with your prescription drug costs or if you want to apply for the extra help, call Social Security at **1-800-772-1213 (TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778)** or visit www.socialsecurity.gov. You also can apply at your State medical assistance office.

To learn more about Medicare prescription drug coverage and how to join a plan, call **1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048)** or visit www.medicare.gov on the Internet.

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